

Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart

1866 –

Other Names:

- Brown Joeys
- Josephite nuns
- Sisters of St Joseph

URL: <http://www.sosj.org.au/>

Details

The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart is a religious order founded in 1866, at Penola in South Australia. Its first member and Superior was Mary MacKillop. The Sisters were active in several Australian states in education and child welfare, establishing several schools, orphanages and babies' and children's Homes.

The order of the Sisters of St Joseph was founded in 1866, at Penola in South Australia. Its first member and Superior was Mary MacKillop. The Sisters of St. Joseph was co-founded as a new religious order by Mary MacKillop and Father Julian Tenison Woods, originally to fill teaching roles in Penola. In 1867 the Order moved to Adelaide. While continuing with their educational work the Sisters took on other social welfare roles.

The Sisters' 'rule of life', as related by historian, Sister Marie Louise Foale, stipulated that:

...the members of the new Order were to be ordinary women who lived in small groups among the people, with no visible means of support. They were to teach poor children and manage charitable institutions for destitute and otherwise socially disadvantaged people, especially women and children.

Foale also describes the Sisters' 'frugal' lifestyle and their willingness to work long hours in 'trying conditions' in their service of those in need.

When Sister Mary MacKillop was expelled from the Adelaide Diocese in 1883 she went to Sydney. Dean Kenny, retired pastor of the North Sydney parish, donated his house, 'Alma Cottage', in Mount Street North Sydney, to the Sisters for use as a Novitiate. By May 1884 Mary MacKillop had moved in and acquired surrounding properties, designating them as the Mother House of the Institute. She built a substantial convent, which still stands.

The North Sydney Convent is now called Mary MacKillop Place, in honour of Mother Mary MacKillop, who died there in 1909 and was buried nearby. In 2008 Mary MacKillop was canonised by the Catholic Church and became Saint Mary of the Cross.

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South Australia

By June 1868, the Sisters of St Joseph were managing three charitable institutions in South Australia, St. Joseph's Refuge, St. Vincent de Paul's Orphanage and St. Joseph's House of Providence. In these places, they provided residential care for orphans and deserted children, homeless and destitute women of all ages. They also exerted pressure on the government for the rights of deprived children.

In 1889 the Sisters of St Joseph, at the order of Bishop Reynolds, were replaced at St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage by the Sisters of Mercy. However, in 1903 the Sisters opened a second orphanage, St Joseph's Orphanage at Largs Bay. This institution existed from around 1907 until the 1960s.

In South Australia, the Sisters of St Joseph also ran the Catholic Girls' Reformatory in Kapunda 1897-1909 and the Catholic Girls' Home at Parkside 1930-1943.

Victoria

The Sisters of St Joseph began their work in Victoria in 1889, at Numurkah. In 1890 the Sisters of St Joseph commenced their involvement in child welfare in Victoria, when they took over the administration of the St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children at Surrey Hills from the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

In 1901 the Sisters established the St Joseph's Babies' Home at Broadmeadows which operated until 1975. In 1905 they opened St Joseph's Receiving Home in Carlton, a Home for expectant mothers near the Royal Women's Hospital. After the closure of the babies' home in Broadmeadows in 1975, the Sisters remained involved in foster care and adoption work. These activities by the Sisters in Victoria were taken over by MacKillop Family Services in 1997.

New South Wales

In New South Wales, the first congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph was established in the Bathurst area in 1872. The order ran a number of children's homes in New South Wales as well as Catholic schools. They also ministered to Catholic children in migrant camps and settlements, conducted missions at state schools, and trained Catholic teachers.

The House of Providence ('The Providence') was the Sisters of St Joseph's first project in the Sydney Archdiocese and began in Gloucester Street in The Rocks in March 1880. It was a shelter for neglected and destitute children, old women and vulnerable young girls and also was a Novitiate, for training nuns and the Provincialate office.

The Sisters went on to establish more institutions in New South Wales, accommodating babies, children and single mothers. These included St Joseph's Girls' Home in Lane Cove (1900-1979) which replaced St Joseph's Providence at the Rocks. St Joseph's Home for Children in Croydon ran from 1925 until 1981. In 1952, the Sisters of St Joseph took over the St Anthony's Children's Home in Croydon from the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The Sisters of St Joseph arranged informal adoptions from their orphanages. According to Sister Kathleen Burford, couples adopting were obliged to sign a contract, agreeing to observe certain conditions. The orphanage staff visited the children in their new homes to ensure they were properly cared for, and if they found a breach of contract, would reclaim the child.

Queensland

The Sisters of St Joseph arrived in Queensland in 1869. The order founded schools, orphanages and other community aid organisations in Queensland. The only residential children's institution run by the Sisters was St Joseph's Home, in Bucasia, which opened in 1874 and closed in 1885 when the residents were moved to new premises at Neerkol. The Sisters of St Joseph ran this Home until 1880 when the Sisters of Mercy took over

management of the home.

Western Australia

The Sisters of St Joseph have been in Western Australia since 1887. They ran the St Joseph's Preventorium in Kellerberrin, an institution for sick and undernourished children aged between 5 and 12, from 1929 to 1976. In the 1950s, some children (around 7 boys) from the Catholic Child Migration Scheme were sent to Kellerberrin. By 1973 the institution was classed as a boarding school rather than a Home for sick or needy children, and it closed in 1976.

Tasmania

The Sisters of St Joseph came to Tasmania in 1887 and established a foundation community at Westbury. The Sisters have since opened and managed numerous schools throughout the state, including St Joseph's Waterton Hall. The order did not run any residential children's institutions in Tasmania. (St Joseph's Waterton Hall was approved as an institution to receive British child migrants in 1952, but did not receive any.)

Gallery



The presbytery at Kincumber where the sisters and 22 boys from the Providence, Dawes Point, took up residence in 1887

Description: This is a copy of an image reproduced in K.E. Burford's *Unfurrowed Fields*.

More info

Related Entries

Ran

- [St Anthony's Family Service \(1976 - 1997\)](#)
Date: 1976 - 1997
- [St Anthony's Home \(1943 - 1976\)](#)
Date: 1943 - 1976
- [St Joseph's Nursery \(1959 - 1976?\)](#)
Date: 1959 - 1976?
- [St Joseph's Preventorium \(1929 - 1976\)](#)
- [St Anthony's and St Joseph's Centre of Care \(1980 - 2003\)](#)
- [St Anthony's Children's Home \(c. 1921 - 1943\)](#)
Date: 1921 - 1943
- [St Joseph's Girls' Home \(1900 - 1979\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Home for Children, Croydon \(1925 - 1981\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Orphanage, Kincumber \(1887 - 1979\)](#)
- [St Margaret's Home for Unwed Mothers \(1894 - 1998\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Providence \(1880 - 1901\)](#)
Date: 1885 - 1997
- [St Anthony's Home Croydon \(1925 - 1980\)](#)
Date: 1952 - 1980
- [St Martha's Industrial Home \(1888 - 1969\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Orphanage, Bucasia \(1874 - 1885\)](#)
Date: 1874 - 1879

- [Catholic Girls' Home Parkside \(1930 - 1943\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Babies' Home \(1975 - 1985\)](#)
Date: 1975 - 1985
- [Catholic Girls' Reformatory, Kapunda \(1897 - 1909\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Children's Home \(1969 - 1980\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Junior Boys' Home \(1960s - 1969\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Orphanage Largs Bay \(1907 - 1960s\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Refuge \(1868 - c. 2001\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Sanatorium, Largs Bay \(1903 - 1907?\)](#)
- [St Vincent de Paul Orphanage \(1866 - 1975\)](#)
Date: 1868 - 1879
- [St Joseph's Waterton Hall \(1951 - 1970?\)](#)
- [St Joseph's Foundling Hospital \(1901 - 1975\)](#)
Date: 1901 - 1975
- [St Joseph's Home for Boys \(1925 - c. 1967\)](#)
Date: 1925 - 1967
- [St Joseph's Home for Children, Sisters of St Joseph \(1967 - 1991\)](#)
Date: 1967 - 1991
- [St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children, Sisters of St Joseph \(1890 - 1925\)](#)
Date: 1890 - 1925
- [St Joseph's Babies' and Family Service \(1985 - 1997\)](#)
Date: 1985 - 1997
- [St Joseph's Receiving Home \(1902 - 1985\)](#)
St Joseph's Receiving Home came under the management of the Sisters of St Joseph in 1905.
Date: 1905 - 1985

Related Organisations

- [MacKillop Family Services \(1997 - current\)](#)
In 1997, MacKillop Family Services was formed to continue to provide services to children, young people and families formerly run by the the Sisters of St Joseph.
- [Mary MacKillop Centre, South Perth \(1887 - current\)](#)
- [Sisters of St Joseph Archives, Adelaide \(1866? - current\)](#)
- [Government Agricultural Farm, Scheyville \(1905 - 1940\)](#)
From 1957, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart ministered to Catholic children at Scheyville, when it was a migrant hostel.
- [Archives of Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of St Joseph \(c. 1866 - current\)](#)

Resources

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